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ABSTRACT

From 1987 to 1995, the Accelerated Schools Project moved from a two-school pilot project to a national movement of over 700 schools in 35 states. This paper examines how the Accelerated Schools Centers have helped the expansion of the accelerated schools movement by recruiting and supporting schools in their regions, and how their institutional settings have influenced expansion efforts and support at each site. In particular, the paper looks at the growth of two centers established in university settings that participated in the 4-year Chevron-sponsored Satellite Center Project (1989-94). The two centers are located at the University of New Orleans (Louisiana) and at California State University, Los Angeles (California). The growth of Accelerated Schools Centers in universities depends on the following variables: (1) the mission of the institution; (2) the requirements made by the institution for professional advancement; (3) the rank of the participating faculty members; (4) the support of the dean and key senior faculty members; (5) the ability of the center team to raise funds; and (6) the commitment of the center team to establish a more independent center within the university. One chart is included. Contains 35 references. (LMI)

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The Accelerated Schools Movement: Expansion and Support through Accelerated Schools Centers

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Ilse Brunner, Jim Meza, Sabrina Mims

Introduction

From 1987 to 1995, the Accelerated Schools Project has moved from a two-school pilot project to a national movement of over 700 schools in 35 states. This very rapid expansion is mainly due to the growing demand from schools to be part of the movement driven by their perceived need for change and by the exciting changes conventional schools can observe in accelerated schools.

When asked what makes accelerated schools so successful, members of accelerated school communities will point out that it is the accelerated schools philosophy and process that keeps the school moving toward a shared vision of a school community in which children and their families, staff and administration, and the community at large, work together to produce an environment for learning in which all children can be successful in becoming thoughtful, creative, productive and caring citizens.

The dramatic changes in student learning effected by accelerated schools require profound transformations in the school culture. Schools need to develop strong beliefs and act upon them. Accelerated schools make sure that the whole school community is convinced that (1) all children can learn, that (2) all children are gifted and talented, and that (3) a school can only be a great place for all children if we consider it to be a great place for our own children.

Accelerated Schools: A Philosophy and a Process

Accelerated schools adopt the accelerated schools philosophy and follow a systematic process to develop their own vision, to understand their own challenges and to work together to achieve their own goals. (Hopfenberg et al. 1993) The accelerated schools philosophy is based on three interrelated principles: (1) *unity of purpose* - parents, teachers, administrators. students, support staff, the district and the local community work together to make changes in the school that will benefit

all students; (2) *empowerment coupled with responsibility* - all members of the school community engage in a shared decision making process, accept responsibility for implementing the decisions made, and stand behind the consequences of these decisions; (3) *building on strengths* - the emphasis in all activities is to find the strengths of the school, its teachers, families and students and build on these strengths to meet the challenges on their path to create their dream school.

Accelerated school communities share a set of values and consciously bring these values into their day-to-day activities through communication and collaboration. The school is seen as a center of shared expertise in which there is sufficient trust among its members that experimentation, discovery and risk-taking are encouraged and mistakes are considered learning opportunities. There is a community spirit that promotes active participation and shared reflection, and a focus on equity.

Only by working and talking together does learning happen. Accelerated schools engage in a systematic process of self-discovery and visioning before they develop a list of needed changes that will take the school from where it is currently to the dream school they envision. The situations that fall short of the school's vision of how they want to be are transformed into challenge areas. The school creates a governance structure around the transformation of the school by creating work teams, called cadres, where teachers, support staff, parents and student representatives work together to find ways to address these challenges.

The cadres are the structural basis for school transformation. Every member of the school community participates in one cadre. Each cadre uses a systematic inquiry process to address the challenges of its area. The inquiry process allows the cadres to define their challenge area, to analyze its root causes, to develop a set of solutions and an action plan to integrate them, to implement that action plan and to evaluate it. Representatives of each cadre participate in a steering committee that coordinates the activities of all cadres and makes sure that all activities are inspired by the shared vision and bring the school towards it. School-wide decisions are made by the school as a whole where all cadre members participate.

This transformation into an accelerated school needs effective nurturing over time. The National Center of the accelerated schools movement has responded to this need by training coaching teams and establishing Accelerated Schools Centers in different parts of the nation that are charged with launching accelerated schools and providing them with support until their transformation process is completed and

they have become learning organizations capable of self-renewal. (Brunner, Heelen, LeTendre 1995)

In this paper we examine how the Accelerated Schools Centers have helped the expansion of the accelerated schools movement by recruiting and supporting schools in their regions, and how their institutional settings have influenced expansion efforts and support at each site. We particularly look at the growth of two Centers established in university settings that participated in the four-year Chevron-sponsored Satellite Center Project (1989-1994) and at the lessons we learned from this partnership.

The Chevron Satellite Center Project

The Accelerated Schools Satellite Center Project was developed as a response to the need for more accelerated schools across the nation and to provide quality support services to these schools. It also responded to the demand to educate future teachers and administrators in the philosophy and process of Accelerated Schools, so that the continuity of the Accelerated Schools Movement was guaranteed.

In 1988, after the initial pilot schools had finished their first year as accelerated schools, the Accelerated Schools team at the National Center developed a plan to expand the Project with the help of university-based satellite centers. These Accelerated Schools Centers were to "launch and to provide follow-up support to accelerated schools in their regions" and to "work with educational agencies in their region to support these schools and to help prepare teachers and administrators to become part of the accelerated schools movement". They were to "contribute to a greater understanding of accelerated schools through practice, research and evaluation, and together form the Accelerated Schools Center Network." (National Center 1992) These Accelerated Schools Centers were to enter into a voluntary affiliation with the National Center in order to become partners in the promotion and implementation of the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process.

At the same time, Chevron USA president Will Price asked his Community Affairs staff to develop an action plan around the following three objectives: (1) detect the key problems facing the American education system, (2) determine how these problems were addressed by US companies, and (3) to identify a program for educational renewal that would be worthy of Chevron support. The study team analyzed more than 250 programs before it chose the Accelerated Schools Project as the center piece of its educational initiative. (National Center 1991)

The National Center in collaboration with the Chevron Corporation selected four Colleges of Education to house the first Accelerated Schools Centers. The universities selected were San Francisco State University, the University of New Orleans, California State University at Los Angeles, and Texas A&M. During the next four years these four Centers and the National Center went through an intensive learning process which produced quite spectacular results.

The following chart, taken from the Chevron Report (National Center 1994), highlights the tremendous impact of the Project on educational renewal and children's lives.

	Expectation	Direct Impact	Indirect Impact
# Satellite Centers	4	4	9 Centers + 2 Networks
# Schools	4	325	600
# Students	2,000	106,446	over 300,000
Subscribers to Newsletter	3,500	12,000	12,000 + overrun additional requests
Ongoing Research	Provide Research Support	43 papers and publications	Dissemination through presentations in National Associations and publications in journals and books

Chart 1. Expectations & Achievements

Encouraged by the strong partnership with the four Accelerated Schools Centers· initiated with Chevron funding, the National Center was able to start additional five Centers and two State Networks with different funding sources The National Center has used its partnership between universities to develop its capacity to support Accelerated Schools Centers in other institutions and to establish Networks of Centers and Coaching Teams across the county.

In support of these ever growing partnerships and networks, the National Center launched and continues to publish the Accelerated Schools Newsletter. The current subscriber base is over 12,000. Ongoing research and refinement of the Accelerated School model have continued throughout the duration of the Chevron Project. For example, over 43 papers and other publications as well as presentations have grown out of the collaboration Also, there has been tremendous leverage of donor investment in training and outreach due to the experience of piloting a model for Accelerated Schools Centers and an Accelerated Schools Center Agreement.

How to Establish Effective Support for School Renewal

Since the early eighties large scale, systemic restructuring efforts have had a growing impact on US educational nationwide. The reorganization and spiritual renewal of so many schools has produced new knowledge with respect to intra-institutional and inter-institutional relationships that help and hinder these efforts. Three major dynamics have surfaced as powerful elements of support for school renewal: building partnerships, participating in networks, and developing strategies for organizational learning.

Partnerships

John Goodlad who has studied school-university partnerships for several decades suggests that schools, universities, and school districts "will work closely together with one another as equal partners towards satisfying mutually beneficial self-interests." (Sirotnik/Goodlad 1998:178) However, in order to make these partnerships successful, he found that the partners must bring different strengths to the enterprise which have the potential of mutually satisfying their self-interests. Furthermore, there must be "sufficient selflessness on the part of each partner to assure the satisfaction of self-interest by all involved." (Goodlad 1985:41)

According to Goodlad the diverse members of a partnership need to develop collegial relationships of equals, building on a shared commitment to a common vision and agreed-upon goals. They have to develop channels of communication through which they share outside information and the knowledge that is produced by their interactions. There needs to be an ongoing conversation among the members of a partnership to clarify goals and to become familiar with the culture

and the organizational features of their partners, so that they can develop strategies that build on their strengths and can produce meaningful change.

In these partnerships new leaders will emerge in many different realms of the common institutional change project. These leaders distinguish themselves through their willingness to trust each other, to take risks, to be engaged in many different change processes simultaneously, and to treat all participants in the as equals. The joint renewal is accomplished through an ongoing process of inquiry in which the challenges of each partner institution are problematized and analyzed from a systemic perspective which focuses on the interdependence and interrelations of the partner institutions and their contexts. (Sirotnik/Goodlad 1988:178-179)

As we will show below, Accelerated Schools Centers are in the process of building partnerships with state departments of education, school districts, large corporations and the local business community, community agencies, and an ever growing number of schools. It seems that the success of their enterprise will depend largely on their ability to promote the explicit use of the principles of participatory democracy, responsible leadership, and reflective practice within each participating institution and in their dealings with each other.

Networking

Whereas partnerships are formal arrangements of collaboration of different institutions that normally do not work together, networks are characterized as informal relationships among individuals or institutions which are somehow alike. Networks have been defined as "a connected set of social actors exchanging socially relevant material." (Miles 1977:2) Networks "facilitate the sharing of information and psychological support among independent innovators and problem solvers who link together voluntarily as equals seeking assistance not provided by established systems." (Parker 1977:25)

Networks are diffuse and do not have specific goals. They are support structures for institutional partners who share a philosophy and work on similar projects. Generally, networks only function well when they have a facilitating agency that provides information to all members of the network and that organizes periodical face-to face meetings either with various groupings of the network members or with all of its members. Partnerships will form networks when they share a large enough common agenda and feel that they need additional support that the individual partnerships cannot provide.

In the Accelerated Schools Project networking has become a powerful vehicle for professional growth on all levels. Task forces within and between schools have established networks for the mutual exchange of information and psychological support. The Centers organize regional or statewide networks among schools, facilitating the exchange of experiences through regular meetings in which common issues and challenges are addressed. They also promote the exchange of information through newsletters. Periodic retreats of the networking partnerships allow the partners to assess their progress and to redirect their efforts. As we will see below, regular meetings, newsletters, retreats, and the participation in national associations have helped maintain and expand the accelerated schools networks.

Organizational Learning

Changes will not have a permanent impact on educational institutions if they cannot learn from them as organizations. Organizational learning is different from individual learning processes in so far that it is not the sum of individual learnings but a sustained collective effort that develops its own dynamics. Peter Senge identifies five disciplines that promote organizational learning: personal mastery, mental models, shared vision, team learning, and systems thinking. Disciplines are for Senge a "body of theory and technique that must be studied and mastered to be put into practice ... "a developmental path for acquiring certain skills or competencies." (Senge 1990: 11) To be a learning organization means to practice these five disciplines as a life-long learner.

Personal mastery refers to a personal vision for the organization in which the individual is working and for his/her own role in it, as well as a clear perception of the organization's current reality. The tension between the "is" and the "ought" will create the energy and the commitment that is needed to achieve the vision.

With mental models Senge describes the generalizations and abstractions individuals form based on concrete data. Mental models are pre-judgments -prejudices - that help us make sense of the world. However, very often these generalizations are not accurate as they are based on a limited set of experiences that may no longer be relevant or even existing. Shared mental models help communication among partners. But it is the task of the communication partners to deconstruct their mental models, to test their assumptions, and to distinguish between their espoused theories and their theories in use.

Building a shared vision is essential for any kind of organizational transformation. Personal masteries will join and create a synergistic whole that

produces enthusiasm and commitment. According to Senge a shared vision goes much beyond an idea, it is "a force in people's hearts, a force of impressive power" (1990:206). It is a vital power that permeates an organization producing meaning, coherence, and connectedness.

Team learning produces collective intelligence, larger than the sum of the individual intelligences. Team learning implies suspending one's own judgments and listening carefully to one's partners. It grows with conversations and dialogues and the creation of a shared discourse which allow the alignment of the thought processes of the team or group members.

Systems thinking is the corner stone of organizational learning. It focuses on the interconnectedness of our actions and the context in which we act. It is a conceptual framework which allows us to see patterns, structures, processes and dynamics, the interrelationships of all elements that constitute a whole. It is a set of general principles and specific tools and techniques which can be applied to understand complex living systems that are constantly changing.

Using the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process is using the disciplines for organizational learning. Organizations participating in the Accelerated Schools Project develop shared mental models through Taking Stock and Inquiry. They develop a Shared Vision. They focus on team learning using the Inquiry process for addressing their challenges. They emphasize personal mastery in the day-to day interactions of all participating members of the school community. And they develop a systems perspective dealing with complex educational issues in which even minor changes in one part of the school system have repercussions in the system as a whole.

As we will show below, the Satellite center Project provided some organizational learning experiences that changed important aspects of the whole Accelerated Schools Project and had an impact on its organizational self-image.

Methodology

In the course of a final evaluation of the Chevron Satellite Center Project, the four Accelerated Schools Centers that had received initial funding through Chevron systematized their experiences based on the extensive documentation all Centers created and collected in the five year period of Chevron funding. The documentation consisted of quarterly reports during the first year, semester reports during the second year, and annual strategic action plans and year-end reports in years three and four. In addition, on part of the National Center, there were the

training agendas and training products, minutes and reports of annual retreats, site visit reports of the two visits per year to each Center by National Center Staff, school and Center evaluations, and a voluminous correspondence between the Centers and the Project Coordinator at the National Center. On part of the Satellite Centers, there were documents of their own school training sessions, minutes of staff meetings, school site visits, monthly and quarterly meetings with representatives from schools, minutes of annual retreats, and periodic evaluations of school and Center activities. As a result of this systematization process, the National Center and the four Chevron Centers wrote a report to the Chevron Corporations that reflected the growth and development of the four Centers and at the National Center, and the impact the Project had on the lives of 325 school communities.

In this paper the directors of two Accelerated Schools Centers - the Centers at the University of New Orleans and the Center at California State University- Los Angeles - and the coordinator of the Chevron Project on part of the National Center (1991-1994) use the Chevron Report and the accumulated documentation to systematize the experiences of these two Centers and the lessons learned from them, analyzed from the perspective of organizational learning, partnerships, and networking. The paper has two parts: In the first part the two Centers give a short description of their genesis, growth, current status, and future developments. In the second part the authors summarize the lessons learned from their involvement in this collaborative effort of school renewal.

The Accelerated Schools Center at the University of New Orleans

Genesis

The Accelerated Schools Center at the University of New Orleans (UNO) was established in the spring of 1990 and funded by a three year grant from Chevron, USA. Initially, the UNO center consisted of one full-time visiting professor, one full time graduate assistant and a part-time faculty member. After participating in accelerated schools training conducted by the National Center for Accelerated Schools at Stanford University, Ca., the UNO Accelerated Schools Satellite Center began providing technical assistance by launching a pilot school located in the inner-city of New Orleans. The UNO center volunteered services and worked with

one other New Orleans public school, but the school did not continue to pursue the project after year one.

Growth

In the spring of 1991, the UNO Satellite Center submitted a grant proposal to the Louisiana State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education (BESE) to expand the project. The proposal was funded in the amount of $200,000 and eight new schools were launched statewide (one school in each BESE district). Two research associate positions were established to support the expansion. During the fall of 1991, one additional New Orleans school was brought into the project supported by funding from the continuing Chevron grant. The original pilot school, eight BESE grant schools, and the new school funded by Chevron are described as first generation schools.

Seven additional schools were initiated in the process in the fall, 1992, making a total of 15 schools supported by BESE and funded in the amount of $400,000. These seven new schools are described as second generation schools. Two additional research associates, two full-time graduate students, and one 75% time graduate assistant were hired to support the project. In 1993, these 15 first and second generation schools were funded again by BESE. Chevron funding also continued, but this grant ended in the spring of 1993.

In 1994, twelve new accelerated schools (described as third generation schools) were launched with 11 of them being funded by a $460,000 grant from BESE. One of the twelve schools was launched by funding from its local school district. The 1994 expansion did not require an increase in full-time staff because the UNO center implemented a new training model. Two consultants and one UNO faculty member (who had been trained in the Accelerated Schools Process) provided part-time services to support the growth in schools during 1994.

In an effort to develop a statewide network of accelerated schools and build a support system for these participating schools, the UNO center coordinates three or more statewide meetings which are hosted by an accelerated school. The UNO center also publishes a statewide accelerated schools newsletter that highlights events of the schools as they implement the accelerated schools process.

Current Status

Currently, the UNO Accelerated Schools Satellite Center is supporting 28 schools representing 19 school districts throughout Louisiana. The project impacts a

total of 8,162 students; 73% of the students are minority and 83% of the students are receiving free or reduced price lunch. As a result of the increasing number of requests from schools wishing to become accelerated schools and after collaboration with the National Center, the UNO center has changed its method of supporting schools. During the first four years, school support was provided by a direct service training model. In this approach to technical assistance, the UNO staff member became a coach for the school community and the maximum number of schools that could be assigned to one coach was four. In 1994, the UNO center adopted a coaching model to support growth and expansion of accelerated schools in Louisiana. The goal of the coaching model was to build the capacity of persons in school districts throughout Louisiana to help their schools transform themselves into accelerated schools. The UNO staff member serves as a mentor to the coaches at the school site.

Also, during 1994-95, the UNO center received a grant of $100,000 from BellSouth Foundation. The grant provides funding for collaboration with the Accelerated Schools Satellite Center at the College of Charleston and the UNO center to examine how well teacher training programs are preparing new teachers to work in schools that are involved in a restructuring process. The BellSouth Foundation grant also supports the development of a self-assessment instrument for schools to use in tracking and modifying their progress in the restructuring process.

Future Developments

The UNO center has recently received BESE approval of $375,000 to expand the coaching model to six schools and continue technical assistance to second and third generation schools during the 1995-96 school year. However, the ten original pilot accelerated schools will no longer be part of the statewide BESE grant, but will become eligible for BESE block grant money. Accelerated Schools has been approved by BESE as a model program, and local school districts can receive block grant funding from the state if they choose to participate in the model program.

The UNO center is currently collaborating with the Education Commission of the States (ECS) and the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) to expand its role and services geographically. ECS has asked the UNO center to participate in the New American Schools Development Corporation as a design team and service school districts and schools who are interested in implementing the Accelerated Schools Process. SREB has also invited the UNO center to collaborate with them in

adapting accelerated school strategies to better prepare middle school students for high school.

New Courses

During the 1995 spring semester, the Department of Educational, Leadership, Counseling, and Foundations offered a three hour graduate course in accelerated schools. This course is approved by BESE as an exemplary course and the graduate student's tuition and the instructors salary is reimbursed by the BESE.

Research and Evaluation

The UNO center has published twelve articles in professional journals and has published three chapters in professional books. The UNO staff has also made 25 presentations at professional meetings and has published two dissertations.

Funding: 1990-1995

Chevron	$ 225,000
Board of Elementary and Secondary Education	$ 1,460,000*
St. Charles Parish School Board	$ 19,000
Orleans Parish School Board	$ 18,000
Rapides Parish School Board	$ 12,500
BellSouth Foundation	$ 100,000

*Funding is based on $12,500 per school site for the first year.

The Accelerated Schools Center at California State University - Los Angeles

The rapid demographic, sociological, and economic transformation in greater Los Angeles has created unprecedented challenges and opportunities. Still, the most urgent problem is underachievement of the ethnically and linguistically diverse student populations. The Accelerated Schools Project has made a significant and positive impact in addressing the chronic underachievement in students in South Central Los Angeles, as it has for students throughout the country.

The Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership

In an attempt to institutionalize the Accelerated Schools model throughout the School of Education at CSLA, the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership was formed. The Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership is composed of the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center (LAASC), The Accelerated Charter School, The California State University Charter School of Education, and Local Businesses and Community Members. The purpose of this partnership is to launch and support the first Accelerated Charter School in South Central Los Angeles by teaming the School of Education and the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center with public and private sector agencies in order to introduce a bold new model for education and training.

In order to sustain and increase these positive results, this type of model must change the infrastructure of the public school as well as the University. Such is the goal of the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership. Operating with the Accelerated Charter School as a Professional Development School for the CSLA Charter School of Education, a powerful coalition has been established with the private sector and public sector agencies to create a seamless educational infrastructure from preschool education to higher education and entry into the labor market.

Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center

The Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center's primary function is to support existing Accelerated Schools, and to launch new schools throughout the greater southern California area. The Center currently supports elementary and middle schools in the Los Angeles Unified School District, Val Verde Unified School District, and Redondo Beach Unified School District. In addition to its work at public school sites, the Center also seeks to institutionalize the model by conducting Accelerated Schools seminars for CSLA teaching interns who later do their internships at one of the local Accelerated School sites. In a similar way, the Accelerated Schools Process is interwoven into teaching methods courses as an effective means of enhancing the education of all students in urban settings. Through the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership, plans are now underway to establish an Accelerated Schools Specialist Program which will offer a special credential to teachers, staff, and parents who have had additional professional development through Accelerated Schools Master's Courses in addition to working in an Accelerated School.

The CSLA Charter School of Education

As a Charter School of Education, CSLA has allowed innovation to flourish as faculty, students, and community incorporate best practice and research-based knowledge with integrated technology, and engage in experiential learning that promotes the synthesis of theory and practice. The Charter School of Education seeks to infuse the Accelerated Schools transformational philosophy throughout its curriculum, organization, and instructional practices. Most importantly, it has launched the first Accelerated Charter School, the *Accelerated School*, as a model lab elementary school in Watts as its centerpiece demonstration site. In addition, it continues to support existing accelerated schools in South Central Los Angeles, as well as in the neighboring communities.

The entire CSLA School of Education faculty, administrators, students, and community members have reorganized into task forces with particular objectives that will bring the School of Education in line with its vision. Courses are also being developed along with career ladder opportunities for parents, faculty, and staff at the various Accelerated schools sites. This parallels the process that takes place as the individual public schools adopt the Accelerated Schools model for their own transformations.

The Accelerated School

The Accelerated School is the only K-6 approved state charter school located in South Central Los Angeles. The goal of the Accelerated School is to continue to establish the highest standards and expectations for student achievement which have distinguished accelerated schools across the nation. A second goal is to promote a desire for life-long learning and maintain a commitment to model the skills and behaviors needed to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.

Both directors, Jonathan Williams and Kevin Sved, are former teachers from the Ninety-ninth St. Accelerated School and are experienced in the accelerated schools model. They, along with a core of teachers, staff, parents, community members and CSLA University personnel have established a strong partnership and foundation for ongoing communication and collaboration.

Research and Dissemination

The Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center has published seven articles in professional publications, and has given a total of 23 invited presentations at state-wide and national conferences. It has integrated the Accelerated Schools Project in

many University courses, and a number of student teachers are being placed annually in accelerated schools. LAASC is a member of the Accelerated Schools Special Interest Group at AERA.

Funding Issues

One of the biggest challenges at the California state university level for funding a project such as the Accelerated Schools Project is that one has to rely on outside funding sources of varying longevity. This greatly diminishes the stability of the project and services the project is able to provide. Fortunately, at the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center, resources have been made available through continuous funding source exploration and submission of grant proposals, both at the Center level and at the individual site level.

The Center has been able to expand as a result of numerous successful grants, yet the struggle for continued support through outside agencies continues to be a major challenge. Each funding source is limited in its scope and period of funding. As a result, certain activities are no longer possible with the loss of various funding sources since several Center faculty members no longer receive release time from teaching their regular university courses to pursue Center activities. For this reason, the Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Partnership was formed as a means of actively institutionalizing the model into the school of education as part of the primary mission of the Charter School of Education at CSLA. Though outside funds are still needed, the flexibility offered through the Charter helps in establishing a strong network of commitment towards this effort.

Expansion of Funding: 1990 - 1995

Chevron	$225,000
Urban Services Project (Federal Grant)	$175,000
Redondo Beach School District	$ 9,000
Val Verde School District	$ 90,000
CSU mini grants	$ 5,700
Wells Fargo (Charter School**)	$250,000
Pacific Research Institute (CS**)	$ 5,000
Individual School Site Grants**	$100,000+

** (These funds are awarded directly to the school sites to support accelerated schools activities identified by the school.)

Training and Follow-Up

The Los Angeles Accelerated Schools Center has been actively involved in conducting school-wide awareness sessions and whole school trainings at the school sites. Its coaches make weekly follow-up visits to all school in their first year, and less frequent visits according to the needs of the individual school starting with year two. The LAASC team, together with the National Center, organized and implemented the training of district coaches and school teams in the Redondo Beach and the Val Verde Unified School Districts. In addition, in order to get more faculty members involved, the team organized a training for faculty members from other CSU campuses. These faculty members serve as coaches in accelerated schools of their regions. In 1994, the Center organized the first Southern California Regional Coaches Retreat in which coaches trained by the National Center and the LAASC coaches shared their experiences.

Center Growth

1990/91	3 faculty members (part-time) and the Dean
1991/92	3 faculty members (part-time), the Dean, 1 student assistant
1992/93	4 faculty members (part-time), the Dean, 1 graduate intern, 1 student assistant
1993/94	6 faculty members (part-time), the Dean, 1 graduate intern, 1 student assistant
1994/95	8 faculty members (part-time), the Dean, 3 graduate interns, 1 student assistant (3 faculty and 2 graduate interns are team members from CSU San Bernadino)

Some Lessons Learned from the Collaborative Partnership with Regional Accelerated Schools Centers

The lessons summarized below are the result of a second level analysis of the Chevron Report which was jointly planned, organized, and written by the four Chevron funded Accelerated Schools Centers and staff from the National Center. Using the Chevron Report as our data base, the authors systematized and summarized some of the insights of all four centers and organized them under the following sub-headings:

- Launching and Support of Accelerated Schools
- Growth and Institutionalization of the Accelerated Schools Centers
- Toward a Model for the Establishment and Support of Accelerated Schools Centers

Launching and Support of Accelerated Schools

The success of Accelerated Schools Centers in working with schools depends on apparently contradictory strengths. On the one hand the Centers need to gently nurture and encourage the school communities venturing into systemic school renewal. On the other hand, they need to demonstrate a clear independence of thought and strength of conviction to be able to debunk the conventional wisdom of remediation, tracking, and other unquestioned practices and to embrace a very different philosophy and process before seeing its positive results. The Accelerated Schools Centers learned many powerful lessons during the first four years of their involvement with the Project that attest to this affirmation.

The Power of Shared Commitment

One of the first lessons the Centers learned was that schools will not be successful when they are selected by the district office without a buy-in from the entire school community. Our required 90 % buy-in is a critical determinant of success. All Centers agree that there has to be a genuine commitment and passion on the part of the principal, teachers and support staff, as well as parents and students to transform the school to their dream school. That transformation includes critically examining where their school is initially, developing a shared vision, and the willingness to work together to make the dream school a reality.

Exploratory and clarification processes before school communities decide to become accelerated schools are extremely important. School communities need a clear, first hand understanding of the accelerated schools process in order to make informed decisions about buy-in. Lack of clarity regarding the buy-in decision generates many problems during the first year of implementation.

Accelerated Schools Centers also learned that they could only start to work with the schools when they accepted them whole-heartedly exactly the way they were, with all of their strengths and weaknesses, as well as successes and failures. The Centers had to accept that some school communities need little support to transform themselves whereas others need long-term hand-holding and many

support services in order to succeed. All schools develop their individual paths for the Accelerated School transformation, depending on from where they start as a school community and on what constitutes their vision.

The Need for Commitment of Individual Stake Holders

Analogous to the proverb "It takes a whole village to raise a child", Accelerated Schools Centers found that it takes the individual vision and commitment of each member in the school community to make accelerated schools successful. The Centers agree that the cultural transformation of schools and the realization of a shared dream require the concerted effort of each individual in the school community. This unity of purpose can only be reached when all participants believe in the dream and are passionately resolved to make it a reality. All members of the school community need to feel empowered to make the changes that are required to reach their dream. They need to be part of the decision making process in order to be able to implement the transformation whole-heartedly and with passion. Finally, this transformation needs the strengths of all school community members. In order to master the challenges and overcome the stumbling blocks, schools have to use all the strengths they can harness. In addition, the school's vision and the three principles have to be continually revisited.

School Districts

School district offices play an important role in the successful transformation of individual schools. The climate of the school district influences the growth pattern of the schools. Generally, the Centers found that central offices needs to play a more active and supportive role in the process. Central offices need to share more responsibility for school outcomes, especially as accelerated schools are making the transition away from conventional ways of teaching and conventional school structures.

Principals

The role of the principal is a critical component in the success of schools implementing the Accelerated Schools process. Changing from a school manager or an authoritarian leader to a facilitator is a huge change for some principals. The ability to relinquish control is very difficult for many. It runs counter to traditional administrative training and experiences. However, teachers, parents, and staff members are more likely to become risk takers if they believe that the principal

practices the Accelerated Schools philosophy at more than an "espoused" level. Members of the school community quickly lose hope when the principal's actions do not move to the "in use" level.

The role of the principal as instructional and academic leader and facilitator is vital in the success of accelerated schools, in light of systemic, strong, fully functioning site based management. Therefore many principals have expressed their desire for a special training component early on in the Accelerated Schools training which addresses their specific needs. This would better prepare them for what lies ahead. Old patterns of control come out with fear of the unknown. Greater understanding of the role and responsibilities of the principal in the school transformation need to be gained by the entire school community. It must be clear to the community that teacher /staff/ parent/ students empowerment does not negate the role of the principal.

New principals, uninitiated in the philosophy and process of Accelerated Schools, pose a particular problem to continuing accelerated schools. Their conventional leadership style and their philosophy may not match the philosophy of Accelerated Schools and may imperil the progress the schools have made. Considering the tremendous effort and energy it takes to build a true community of learners in accelerated schools, it is counterproductive to change principals committed to Accelerated Schools during the first five or six years of the transformation process.

Teachers

Overcoming the attitude that the Accelerated Schools process is the same song with a new title is consistently an initial challenge for teachers when launching a new school. Some teacher have a hard time understanding and internalizing the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process. However, the Centers found that a critical mass of teachers. staff, and parents committed to Accelerated Schools can overcome the skepticism and jadedness of their colleagues when they are able to produce changes that move the school in the direction of their shred vision.

The Accelerated Schools transformation is not a quick fix. It requires a radical change in the thinking and actions of administrators, teachers, and support staff. In fact, the more ingrained and habitual ineffective methodologies are in a school, the more difficult and time-consuming is the school transformation. The openness of

staff to rethink their teaching styles and the assumptions underlying their teaching approaches affects the time required for school transformation.

Despite their commitment to Accelerated Schools, some teachers have difficulty moving beyond the status quo or "business as usual" when it comes to changes in their own classroom. Experimenting with new instructional techniques and making deep seated changes in the curriculum require more time and effort than some teachers are willing to give. Again, a critical mass of teachers taking risks and modeling exciting new ways of teaching will change the school environment in such a way that traditional teaching becomes more difficult to maintain.

Parents

Centers and schools found that many parents are eager to be of service to the school and enjoy becoming involved in the Accelerated Schools process. For that to happen schools need to make parents aware that their involvement goes deeper than the traditional activities of participating in PTO/PTA meetings, back to school nights, parent/teacher conferences, bake sales, and classroom volunteering. Once parents see that their ideas are valued and that they become partners in the schools-wide change process they make time to be part of Visioning and Taking Stock committees, and of cadres that will develop actions plans for school-wide improvements.

Opportunities for Team Learning

Implicit in the accelerated schools philosophy and process is the requirement to continuously improve. Out of this commitment to excellence the Accelerated Schools Centers work with accelerated schools until the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process have become embedded in the daily operations of the schools and they can be assured that the schools are continually growing and transforming their practices, using the process of taking stock, visioning, setting priorities, and inquiry to improve their work.

The collaborative processes of team learning take a lot longer and may feel cumbersome to many of the members of the school community who are used to top down decision making. However, they are more effective as a foundation for change to which the whole school community can feel committed. Overall, a team learning approach allows innovative projects to flourish and assures a general move towards the envisioned dream school.

Taking Stock

Intensive team learning takes place in the first year during the Taking Stock process in which the whole school community is involved. Accelerated Schools Centers found that the School as a Whole needs to Take Stock periodically to understand the progress the school has made and to gauge how far it has advanced in its journey towards its dream school.

Inquiry Process

One of the most difficult elements of the Accelerated Schools process is the Inquiry Process. Being trained to find quick solutions to problems and challenges, teachers have a difficult time using the Inquiry Process. Teachers need to realize that they can use the Inquiry Process on a daily basis as a vehicle for team learning. Inquiry helps the school community analyze its challenges from a systemic perspective and find solutions that address the underlying reasons of the challenges. To make maximum use of their time and of their learning, it is important for cadres to set themselves some goals at the beginning of the year and to write an end of the year report as a written reflection of the progress made and the insights gained. Cadres need to assess each year what they have accomplished and in how far their activities have brought the school nearer to its vision. However Centers found that the quality of the reports and evaluations diminish when they need to be completed towards the end of the school year.

In order to gain optimal team learning in a school community, it is good to change cadre membership every two years. In this way teachers, administrators, staff, parents are exposed to different challenges and learn to appreciate the perspectives and points of view of different members of the school community.

Coaching and Technical Assistance

Centers found that providing technical assistance to schools is very challenging and time consuming. Schools look forward to the visits made by the site trainers and coaches, and place a high value on individualized technical assistance for their school. Therefore, it seems that the most effective coaching model is one that uses partners and strong back-up teams to assist in problem solving as well as strategies on how to approach issues developing at the school sites. Coaches benefit from networking with other coaches. Expansion must be carefully monitored so there is sufficient coaching and monitoring at each site.

Meetings and Retreats

UNO found that statewide meetings organized by different accelerated schools became morale boosters for the teachers, principals and coaches, and opportunities for team learning. These meetings have been extremely beneficial in developing a formal network and informal networking activities between schools and individual administrators and teachers. They also gave the host schools the opportunity to display their strengths and to reaffirm their unity of purpose.

Centers also found that annual retreats of all schools helped them focus on their strengths, and promote the sense of belonging that is so necessary for empowerment and a unity of purpose. Some centers successfully promoted networking opportunities among schools in the same district, between principals of different schools, and for coaches of larger regions.

Creative Use of Conflict

Conflicts are a natural byproduct of change and a part of the team learning process. School communities going through the accelerated schools process will inevitably experience some conflict. Additionally, the thorough processes of taking stock and inquiry will uncover latent conflict within the school community. Consequently, conflict resolution should be woven into the Accelerated Schools Project training and should be part of the initial stages. That way everybody can be better prepared if and when conflicts arise as schools go through the process.

Powerful Learning Experiences

Ultimatelly, the success of accelerated schools lies in their capacity to provide an environment in which all students can experience powerful learning experiences. Powerful Learning is a collaborative effort. Administrators, teachers. parents, staff, students and the community need to work together to build powerful learning experiences and to provide the resources. Centers found that Powerful Learning was often utilized in the lower grades, but missing in the upper grades. However, upper grades using similar hands-on strategies and experiential learning processes found that their students became more involved and more eager to learn. Most schools felt that the Centers need to provide more opportunities for sharing Powerful Learning experiences among individual teachers and among participating schools.

Growth and Institutionalization of the Accelerated Schools Centers

Out of the differences in the growth of the various satellite centers, both in terms of on which activities they focused and what they considered their possibilities of expansion, we have learned a number of valuable lessons which we summarize below. In order to give these lessons a certain order, we have listed them under the headlines of our overall concerns: Partnerships, Networking, and Organizational Learning.

Partnerships

Accelerated Schools Centers need to build partnerships between the different institutions that make up the educational system, and they need to make sure that all of them work together to help schools achieve their ambitious dreams. However, the institution in which the Centers are housed influences how these partnerships are established and how effectively they can work together on the different tasks the Accelerated Schools Center has to accomplish.

Influence of the Host Institution

For instance, the mission of their host institution generally influences with how many schools a Center works. A Center housed in a district office has the potential and sometimes even the clear mission to influence all the schools in the district, but it may have difficulties working beyond the boundaries of that district. A Center housed at a state department of education has the potential to impact all the schools in the state, and probably is required to develop its project with the boundaries of the state in mind, providing equitable training conditions across the state. As a case in point, UNO had the mission to establish accelerated schools in the different parishes across the state because of its affiliation and funding arrangements with the State Department.

A Center housed in a university and without strong partnerships between the State Department and/or school districts may only be able to work with a small set of demonstration schools, but it has the potential to transform teacher education, introducing the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process in the school of education and into all of its courses. CSLA is a good example that the Accelerated Schools Center can be influential in the transformation of the whole School of Education.

It seems that the optimal environment for the expansion of accelerated schools exists when the Accelerated Schools Center is able to build a true

partnership between the university, the state department of education and the school districts. Each one of these institutions have to take ownership of the Project and have to become committed to the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process. Collaboration between these three entities expands the potential for school improvement enormously. Through the collaboration of district offices, state departments of education, and universities all schools can find the strong support they need and the services that will enable them to make their dream school a reality. In addition, this collaboration will make it possible that the education of future teachers and administrators will become consistent with the philosophy and process of Accelerated Schools.

Individual and Collective Leadership

Collaboration and leadership go hand in hand. Authentic partnerships will only flourish when they create many different environments in which individual and collective leadership can prosper. Our research shows that the Accelerated Schools philosophy and process promotes leadership on many different levels in the movement. (Christiansen 1995; Finnan, McCarthy, Meza, Slovacek 1995) In the Satellite Center Project we found that Accelerated Schools Centers need strong and visionary leaders who are respected by their colleagues and can inspire colleagues and institutional partners to work together to implement the Accelerated Schools model.

For example, when the former Coordinator of the Satellite Center Project accepted a faculty assignment at the University of Nevada at Las Vegas (UNLV), she brought with her enough credibility that she was immediately able to start an Accelerated Schools Center and to implement the accelerated school model at local elementary schools. On the other hand, Centers with coordinators who were not well established in the institutional hierarchy of their host institution had a very hard time to promote collaboration and to find help for their Project.

Our experience shows us that the institutionalization of Accelerated Schools Centers takes a tremendous effort from all collaborators and needs the buy-in from all levels of the host institution, be it a district office, a state department of education or a university. Therefore, it is critical to identify Center staff who are committed to accelerated schools and willing to redirect professional priorities to support the growth of the Accelerated Schools Movement.

Formal and informal networking among the different partners in the Accelerated Schools Project is the most viable way of keeping the movement alive and of incorporating all new institutions (schools, districts, universities, state departments, non profit organizations) that want to join the movement. Supporting and sustaining radical change in public schools requires tremendous perseverance, energy, and hard work. The Accelerated Schools Centers need nurturing and strong collegial relationships to keep going forward with the transformation of the schools they support. Networking is and will continue to be needed by Satellite Center staff.

Training and Support

In the Satellite Center Project, we found that ongoing contact and networking opportunities with the professional staff of all Centers was critical to keeping the Accelerated Schools Centers as an integral part of the ever growing Accelerated Schools Movement. These opportunities for contact were established with the initial training and are currently continued through periodic meetings and annual retreats for all Centers. At the National Center, the training of the Accelerated Schools Centers involved an eight-day initial training, two annual visits of National Center staff to the different Centers, and a two-day retreat at the end of each school year.

This same pattern - initial training, formal meetings, and annual retreats - can be observed at all different levels in the Project. Most Accelerated Schools Centers working with coaching teams have developed a four or five-day initial training and then bring all coaching teams together in monthly meetings to continue the training process throughout the first year of school transformation. The formal training ends with a retreat for all coaching teams. Coaching teams of continuing accelerated schools, i.e. those schools that are two or more years in the Project, continue to meet periodically to discuss coaching issues and to develop more coaching skills. As Centers mature, they are also better equipped to identify and create support structures they need. This is evidenced by the Center at CSLA that created and hosted a Southern California Coaches Retreat in May 1994.

Likewise, all schools receive an initial two-day school-wide training and continuing training sessions as they go through the first year transformation process. These training sessions also serve as networking opportunities for school community members who generally do not do not have the opportunity to work together, as parents, teachers and support staff for instance.

Annual retreats seem to be vital to the growth of Accelerated Schools Centers and accelerated schools alike. Both need the face-to-face forum to explore common challenges, to share their progress, as well as to learn from the latest experiences and research developed at school sites, regional centers and at the National Center. Most Accelerated Schools Centers organize annual retreats for their coaches and mentors. Likewise, most accelerated schools organize a year-end retreat for their whole school community in which they assess the impact of the changes they have introduced and prepare the change process for the following year.

Newsletters

The regular publication of the Accelerated School Newsletter provides one more way of networking and communication. Teachers, administrators, parents, educational leaders and policy makers can keep up with cutting edge information on what works and doesn't work in accelerated schools. This continuous sharing is an important step in creating a community of accelerated schools practitioners who are learning together. The Accelerated Schools Newsletter of the National Center has inspired many regional newsletters, produced by Accelerated Schools Centers with the focus on their own regional networks of accelerated schools.

Research and Publications

Another path for formal networking has been provided through professional presentations and publications. Many members of the Accelerated Schools Movement have found partners across the nation to do research on shared interests or similar challenges. The meetings of large professional associations as for instance the American Educational Research Association (AERA) and the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development ASCD) provide Accelerated Schools partners with opportunities to thoroughly think through research findings and share their insights with others who are working to improve public education. The Accelerated Schools Centers were instrumental in creating a special interest group, SIG- Accelerated Schools, as part of AERA and to promote symposia and round table discussions at the annual meetings of AERA.

Organizational Learning

The Satellite Center Project provided the National Center with its first experiences working with other institutions of higher learning and with faculty and other educational professionals at several universities. One of the lessons the

National Center learned was, what were realistic and unrealistic expectations. For instance, initially the National Center team asked the satellite centers for quarterly progress reports. Soon it became obvious to all participating Centers that this was a burdensome requirement which did not help the National Center to better understand the dynamics of each Accelerated schools Center. After trying out different formats, all Centers agreed that the reports only provided insights when they were compared to the initial planning. From then on the Centers wrote an annual action plan and an annual report.

The Accelerated Schools Agreement

Two years into the Project the experience of the partnership with the Accelerated Schools Centers led to a joint development of a General Agreement of Affiliation for institutions that want to initiate an Accelerated Schools Center. The National Center and the four Chevron funded Centers worked together to develop an agreement that realistically reflects the organizational development of the Centers. The Agreement foresees a growth process in three stages - from satellite center candidate in the first year to satellite center during the next two to five years according to the intensity of the learning process and the growth of the center, to mature regional Accelerated Schools Center that fulfills similar tasks as the National Center on a regional level.

This Agreement of Affiliation has become a powerful vehicle for demonstrating shared commitment. CSLA has used an adapted version of the agreement to establish partnerships with neighboring universities. Other Centers have developed similar agreements with schools districts and with individual schools.

The Training Process

The training of the Accelerated Schools Center staff was a team learning process developed over the first four years of the partnership, and continues to be developed with the assistance of the mature Centers. The first training model delivered by the National Center to the Chevron Grant Directors consisted of a three- day overview of the project. The National Center's second training experience was a five-day training session for school teams who were then supposed to train their whole school. As an outgrowth of the experience with these two training models and observation of what was needed in the field, the National Center developed the current eight-day Training of Trainers model, based on the

principles of constructivism. The present approach provides coaches with the tools they need to develop their own training program for their schools rather than listening to prepared presentations.

Based on the multiple experiences with Centers and schools, the focus of the National Center's training has changed from training school teams to training groups of coaches who can provide training in their geographic locations to the entire school community. In response to these developments, the Accelerated Schools centers initiated their own coaches trainings. In 1992, CSLA co-trained with National center staff coaching teams for a school district, and the next year, CSLA co-trained their first group of university coaches who would be working with elementary and middle schools. In 1994, UNO co-trained its first group of coaches from school districts with National Center staff. These co-trainings served more than their technical purpose. They became vehicles for collaborative reflection, shared visioning, and a source for renewed commitment.

Toward a Model for the Establishment of Accelerated Schools Centers

One of the lessons learned in this Project which we have pointed out above is the fact that the host institution influences the institutional growth of the satellite center and gives boundaries to their expansion. Here we want to qualify that statement by looking more carefully at the different elements within host institutions which might affect the Centers. In this part we broaden our analysis to include evidence from other Accelerated Schools Centers and State Networks that did not take part in the Chevron Project. This analysis provides some elements for the development of a model for the design of Accelerated Schools Centers.

The university-based Accelerated Schools Centers in our Project seem to indicate that the growth of Centers in universities will depend largely on the following variables: (1) the mission of the institution, (2) the requirements made by the institution for professional advancement, (3) the position of the participating faculty members in the institutional hierarchy, (4) the support of the Dean and key senior faculty given to the center team, (5) the ability of the center team to raise funds, and (6) the commitment of the center team to establish a more independent center within the university with its own full time staff paid for by non-university funds.

(1) Given the main mission of the Colleges of Education with which we work is teacher education, there will be a strong focus on bringing the accelerated schools philosophy and process into their teacher education programs. This has been true for San Francisco State University (SFSU), the University of New Orleans (UNO), California State University at Los Angeles (CSLA), the University of Nevada in Las Vegas (UNLV), Portland State University (PSU), and the College of Charleston (CC). The center teams at these universities have developed courses on Accelerated Schools, and other courses taught by them have components of accelerated schools. In addition, other faculty have asked for presentations on accelerated schools in their courses. In CSLA and in Texas A&M the Colleges of Education are restructuring. The Accelerated schools Center teams in both institutions are in key positions to influence the new structures and contents to such a degree that both center teams see the philosophy and process of accelerated schools as part of the restructuring process.

(2) The requirements for professional advancement influence where Center teams set priorities. This can be seen in the production of papers and in the presentations given by Center staff. The Chevron report has a list of 43 publications and presentations of the four Centers involved. (National Center 1994) The other centers - UNLV, Charleston and Portland State follow the same pattern. This is also the one area in which the university based Centers have developed a sophisticated level of cooperation in the production of the first book of research on accelerated schools, titled *Accelerated Schools in Action: Lessons from the Field* to be published by Corvin Press.

(3) The position of Center staff in the hierarchy of the university influences their possibility of expansion, mainly due to the other commitments professors at different levels in their career face. Untenured professors may be more vulnerable to the pressures of the university to attend to many diverging tasks, as can be seen in the case of SFSU. Tenured professors seem to have more freedom to dedicate themselves to the tasks they are most interested in. They also have more possibility to include other faculty in the Project because of the reputation they have gained. See for instance the case of CSLA.

(4) Strong support from the Dean and from senior faculty has been shown to be very effective in the growth of the centers. In those universities where the Deans have been actively involved in the Project, the centers have become firmly established and have gained good reputations among their colleagues. This has helped the center teams in their negotiations with districts and schools, and it has helped them raise funds for the project.

(5) Fundraising capacity influences the growth of the Centers. As these Centers have to be self-sustaining, they have to establish a strong reputation among funders. They also have to be convincing to districts and schools so that these will allocate moneys for training and follow-up at the school sites. The Center teams with strong support from their Deans have generally also been the more successful fund-raisers.

(6) The teams of UNO, the College of Charleston, CSLA and Portland State have shown that expansion to a larger number of schools may only be possible when the teams are committed to establishing Centers which are financially and in their programs largely independent from the university. At UNO, and the College of Charleston, the teams have developed outside funding bases with which they can pay for full-time staff that is dedicated exclusively to Accelerated Schools. CSLA, UNLV, and Portland Sate staff have established strong relationships with a neighboring school district. This has enabled them to expand, as the district people work as coaches in the accelerated schools.

Accelerated Schools Centers in other host agencies include Illinois, Massachusetts and Missouri which are part of State Departments of Education, and Aurora, an accelerated school district. These center teams face challenges that derive mainly from the large bureaucracies in which they are housed and from their funding sources. Given the National Center's lack of systematic knowledge, we cannot say anything definitive about their potential for growth and the conditions that influence their expansion patterns. However, it seems quite clear that similar elements as in the case of universities operate here as well: (1) The mission of the institution will set the limits for school expansion. (2) The requirements for professional advancement will focus the Center teams' emphasis on certain activities. (3) The position of the participating Center staff in the institutional

hierarchy will provide differing degrees of freedom to act and a different status for the Center. (4) The amount of support provided by the Commissioner of Education or the superintendent and key senior members of the State Department or district office will enhance the Centers' performance opportunities and fund raising ability. (5) The ability of the Center team to either influence the state legislation or to raise additional funds will determine the Centers' capacity to expand. Finally, (6) as has been shown by Illinois and Missouri, the commitment of the Center team to establish more independent Centers within the host organization has brought about strategies to use state moneys in different ways, to add other funding, to connect with other agencies, and to find other ways to have full time staff for accelerated schools.

It seems that Centers grow best when their teams look for allies in the educational system at all different levels and with different institutions. A shared commitment of the state department, universities, and district offices will bring the best results. When we look at Centers that have expanded in a controlled way over the last few years - particularly Illinois, UNO, and Missouri - we can see that the collaboration between institutions has proven to be the condition that allowed the Centers to expand beyond their own institutional limitations. UNO could build such a strong network because it has the support of BESE. In the following years it will even become stronger with districts committed to the Accelerated Schools Project and district trainers well prepared to train and provide follow-up in their schools. Missouri is currently building a strong network in which schools, districts, universities, and the State Department are collaborating members. Illinois had reached the limit in their capacity for expansion, but with the support of coaches from districts and universities the center is now again able to grow.

Although we can only come to tentative conclusions from this limited set of observations, we think that the National Center can influence the institutionalization of Accelerated Schools Centers and their expansion by focusing on the elements mentioned above. However, we believe that it is not necessary that Accelerated Schools Center candidates needs to be strong in all six areas. In fact, our base of experience is currently too small to say anything conclusively. By inviting a variety of institutions to apply to constitute Accelerated Schools Centers, the National Center will be able to build a stronger base of experience, and therefore will be better able to find ways to be supportive to each one of these Centers. Using the Accelerated Schools principles of building on strengths, empowerment coupled

with responsibility, and unity of purpose, the National center will be able find tailor-made ways to enhance the possibilities of each Center.

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